

SPECIAL MEETING CITY COUNCIL
October 04, 2016



CITY OF LINCOLN

SPECIAL MEETING CITY COUNCIL

October 04, 2016

Spencer Short, Mayor

Peter Gilbert, Mayor Pro Tem

Paul Joiner, Council Member

Stan Nader, Council Member

Gabriel Hydrick, Council Member

AS A COURTESY, PLEASE TURN OFF ALL CELL PHONES & ELECTRONIC DEVICES DURING THE MEETING

WORK STUDY SESSION

4:00 PM

City Hall

First Floor Conference Room

**600 Sixth Street
Lincoln, CA 95648**

- 1. ROLL CALL**
- 2. FLAG SALUTE**
- 3. PUBLIC COMMENT** - Members of the public are entitled to address the City Council on any item NOT scheduled on the posted agenda. If you wish to address Council any item of interest to the public and within the Council's purview, please complete a speaker card (voluntary), located at the back of the room and deliver it to the City Clerk prior to the meeting. When your name is called, stand to be recognized by the Mayor and then make your way to the podium. As with all speakers, time will be limited to three (3) minutes, unless extended by the Mayor. Please note: Comments from the audience WITHOUT coming to the podium will be disregarded or ruled out of order. ALL comments/questions



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October 04, 2016

should be addressed to the Mayor. In most cases, the City Council is prohibited from discussing or taking action on any item not appearing on the posted agenda.

4. STAFF REPORT - staff report

- 4.A. After a brief overview of the 5-year projections for the General Fund, staff will be recommending an amendment to the City's General Fund Reserves Policy and to establish a funding program for the Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) obligations. (Ambrose)

[SR - CC Workshop - GF Reserves Policy and OPEB Funding 10-4-16 FINAL.pdf](#)

- 4.B. In February, City Council requested that staff return in October with a progress report of the implementation of certain General Plan Policies, specifically City's adopted Housing Element and affordable housing. (Bermudez)

[Housing Element - final.pdf](#)

5. COUNCIL INITIATED BUSINESS

6. ADJOURNMENT - adjournment



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NOTE: *Materials related to an item on this Agenda submitted to the Council/Redevelopment Successor Agency after distribution of the agenda packet are available for public inspection in the City Clerk's office at 600 Sixth Street, Lincoln, CA during normal business hours. Such documents are also available on the City of Lincoln's website at <http://www.lincolncalifornia.gov/> subject to staff's availability to post the documents before the meeting.*

In compliance with the American with Disabilities Act, the City will provide special assistance for disabled members of the public. The meeting room is wheelchair accessible and disabled parking is available. If you have a disability and need a disability-related modification or accommodation to participate in the meeting, please contact the City Clerk's Office at (916) 434-2490. As a courtesy, please make every effort to inform the Clerk of your needs at least 24 hours prior to the meeting so the City may make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.

Pursuant to applicable laws and regulations, including without limitation, California Government Code Section 65009 and/or California Public Resources Code Section 21177, if you wish to challenge in court any of the above decisions (including any action regarding planning, zoning and/or environmental decisions), you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing(s) described in this notice/agenda, or in written correspondence delivered to the City at, or prior to, the public hearing.



4

City Council Report

SUBJECT: General Fund Reserves and OPEB Funding

SUBMITTED BY: Steve Ambrose, Director of Support Services

DATE: October 4, 2016

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

After a brief overview of the 5-year projections for the General Fund, staff will be recommending an amendment to the City's General Fund Reserves Policy and to establish a funding program for the Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) obligations.

BACKGROUND / INTRODUCTION:

The 2016-2017 year end General Fund balance is projected to be \$10.8 million however; it has taken approximately 10 years to build-up the current fund balance. In FY 2006-2007, the General Fund had a fund balance of \$8.2 million but due to the economic downturn, both the reserved and unreserved portion of the fund balance were critically diminished. It is only through careful management of ongoing expenses as well as no significant changes to service or staffing levels that the City has been able to grow the General Fund balance to its current level.

In January 2011, the City Council established a General Fund Reserve policy in order to maintain critical fund balances which ensure the short- and long-term stability of the City. Following those guidelines, the current projected fund balance of \$10.8 million includes \$2 million in Economic Reserves and \$2 million in Catastrophic Reserves leaving \$6.8 million as an available unreserved General Fund balance which represents 5 months of General Fund operating expenses.

The current economic reserve policy of 15% is a minimum requirement and best practices based on historical impacts indicate we should be at 25% or higher as a minimum in order to continue to be able to respond to emergencies and continue to provide services to the citizens of Lincoln. Staff would like Council to consider establishing an operating/economic reserve at the higher rate of 25% using some of the current unreserved fund balance as a source of funding. This



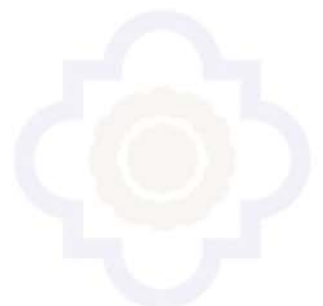
would ensure that there would be designated resources set aside for approximately 3 months of General Fund obligations.

Another area that is critical for the City to begin funding is the Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) obligation that is currently not addressed in the 2016/17 Fiscal year budget. Currently, the 20 year funding required to address this obligation would require an annual commitment of approximately \$512,000 from the General Fund. The balance of the city-wide \$20.6 million obligation would be allocated across all impacted funds using the current method of funding source for salaries, based on a general review of other comparable cities.

Staff will present a future staff report to augment the budget as necessary for all funds in regard to OPEB.

City staff is seeking City Council direction to:

1. Amend the General Fund Economic Reserve to be a minimum of 25% of the General Fund Expenditures.
2. Establish a funding program for the General Fund's portion of the City's OPEB obligation.



City of Lincoln
General Fund Five Year Forecast

Actual	Budget	Projected				
FY 15/16	FY 16/17	FY 17/18	FY 18/19	FY 19/20	FY 20/21	FY 21/22

Revenue

Property Taxes	8,983,948	8,858,468	9,035,637	9,216,350	9,400,677	9,588,691	9,780,464
Sales & Use Taxes	2,844,841	3,308,053	3,374,214	3,441,698	3,510,532	3,580,743	3,652,358
Franchise Taxes	852,458	835,000	839,175	843,371	847,588	851,826	856,085
Other Local Taxes	222,229	210,000	210,000	210,000	210,000	210,000	210,000
Licenses and Permits	655,515	847,203	889,563	934,041	980,743	1,029,781	1,081,270
Fines & Forfeitures	70,088	49,000	49,000	49,000	49,000	49,000	49,000
Use of Money	174,513	110,417	113,177	116,007	118,907	121,880	124,927
Intergovernmental	229,262	207,500	209,575	211,671	213,787	215,925	218,085
Charges for Service	1,636,622	1,633,943	1,663,354	1,693,294	1,723,774	1,754,802	1,786,388
Other Revenues	294,388	282,700	282,700	282,700	282,700	282,700	282,700
Transfer In	445,000	358,861	367,833	377,028	386,454	396,115	406,018
Total Revenue	16,408,864	16,701,145	17,034,228	17,375,161	17,724,163	18,081,462	18,447,294

Expenditure

Salaries	6,772,005	6,993,165	7,167,994	7,167,994	7,275,514	7,384,647	7,495,416
Benefits - PERS	1,327,797	1,314,638	1,321,211	1,327,817	1,334,456	1,341,129	1,347,834
Benefits - Medical	1,086,395	1,110,438	1,134,868	1,159,835	1,185,351	1,211,429	1,238,080
Benefits - Other	859,018	879,529	910,313	942,173	975,150	1,009,280	1,044,605
Professional Svcs	891,545	1,281,139	1,345,196	1,412,456	1,483,079	1,557,232	1,635,094
Other Oper Costs	1,658,835	1,826,228	1,917,539	2,013,416	2,114,087	2,219,792	2,330,781
Transfer Out	338,897	625,989	642,891	660,249	678,075	696,384	715,186
Cost Allocation	2,120,112	2,389,768	2,509,256	2,584,534	2,636,225	2,688,949	2,742,728
Total Expenditure	15,054,604	16,420,894	16,949,268	17,268,475	17,681,937	18,108,841	18,549,725
Revenue - Expenditure	1,354,260	280,251	84,961	106,686	42,226	(27,379)	(102,431)

Fund Balance

Unassigned	6,600,132	4,796,494	4,781,455	4,788,141	4,730,367	4,552,988	4,350,557
Catastrophic Reserves (CR)	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,100,000	2,100,000	2,100,000	2,200,000	2,200,000
CR % of Expenditure	16%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
Economic Reserves (ER)	1,866,111	3,400,000	3,400,000	3,500,000	3,600,000	3,650,000	3,750,000
ER % Expenditure	15%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%
OPEB Contribution	0	550,000	550,000	550,000	550,000	550,000	550,000
Nonspendable	416,894	416,894	416,894	416,894	416,894	416,894	416,894
Total Fund Balance	10,883,137	11,163,388	11,248,349	11,355,035	11,397,261	11,369,882	11,267,451

City of Lincoln
General Fund Five Year Forecast

Assumptions applied in Projections				
FY 17/18	FY 18/19	FY 19/20	FY 20/21	FY 21/22

Revenue

Property Taxes	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Sales & Use Taxes	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Franchise Taxes	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
Other Local Taxes	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Licenses and Permits	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Fines & Forfeitures	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Use of Money	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Intergovernmental	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%
Charges for Service	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%
Other Revenues	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Transfer In	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%

Description

Prop 8 re-assessments near completion
continued growth to support local businesses
slight increases expected with growth
no increase projected
building permits to continue and grow with annexations
no increase projected
continued performance of investment portfolio
cost-share for library increases with additional hours
updated Master Fee Schedule to be implemented
no increase projected

Expenditure

Salaries	2.5%	0.0%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%
Benefits - PERS	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
Benefits - Medical	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%
Benefits - Other	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%
Professional Svcs	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Other Oper Costs	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Transfer Out	2.7%	2.7%	2.7%	2.7%	2.7%
Cost Allocation	5.0%	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%

City proposing minimal staffing changes and salary adjustments
minimal staff changes proposed
based on prior 2-year average increase
minimal staff changes proposed
continue with controls limiting expenditure increases
continue with controls limiting expenditure increases
growth potential in City services other than General Fund

**City Manager's Office**

Matthew Brower
City Manager
916-434-2449

matthew.brower@lincolncalifornia.gov

Memorandum

TO: Honorable Mayor Short and City Council Members
FROM: Jim Bermudez, Development Services Manager
DATE: October 4, 2016
SUBJECT: Housing Element

Background

In February, City Council requested that staff return in October with a progress report of the implementation of certain General Plan Policies, specifically City's adopted Housing Element and affordable housing.

In 2013, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) found the City of Lincoln's Housing Element in compliance with the state law. Per the HCD website,

California State law recognizes the vital role local governments play in the supply and affordability of housing. Each governing body (City Council or Board of Supervisors) of a local government in California is required to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the city, city and county, or county. The Housing Element is one of the seven mandated elements of the local general plan. Housing element law, enacted in 1969, mandates that local governments adequately plan to meet the existing and projected housing needs **of all economic segments** (*emphasis added*) of the community. The law acknowledges that, in order for the private market to adequately address housing needs and demand, local governments must adopt land use plans and regulatory systems which provide opportunities for, and do not unduly constrain, housing development. As a result, housing policy in the State rests largely upon the effective implementation of local general plans and, in particular, local housing elements. Housing element law also requires the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) review local housing elements for compliance with State law and to report its written findings to the local government.

Focusing on the role a Housing Element plays with regard to local land use planning, the Housing Element:

- Identifies the community's housing needs
- Documents goals and objectives of the community with regard to housing production, rehabilitation, and conservation
- Defines the policies and programs that implement the stated goals and objectives

In addition to addressing the housing needs of all income groups, the Housing Element must also address the housing needs for specific segments of the population, including the elderly, those with disabilities, farm workers, and homeless persons.

Goals and Policies

In order to evaluate the City's housing progress, a review of the City's specific housing goals and policies are in order. The City has adopted the following goals and policies:

- Accommodate new housing to meet the needs of present and future Lincoln residents at all income levels
- Conserve and improve the existing housing stock and residential neighborhoods
- Address special needs housing
- Promote equal housing opportunities
- Evaluate the progress in implementing the City's housing programs

Current Implementation

The City continues to authorize development within the Planned Development Zone Districts. This encourages the development of a variety of housing types in the City through utilization of innovative development techniques by permitting flexible development standards. These include zero lot lines, cluster development second units, narrow streets, increased densities, and a lesser land dedication requirement. Building and Planning Division continues among many other activities that further the City's Housing Element goals, the Community Development Department's Building and Planning Divisions continues their biannual review of the Building Code and as-needed reviews of the zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance in order to address unique land use issues found in Lincoln. The Department also prioritized the identification and possible modification of existing application processing requirements, approval criteria, and fees which may have either created a perceived or actual impediment to developing a variety of housing types within the City.

Opportunities

Even with the current implementation measures and the continuing improvement of the entitlement and building permit application processes, there are other programs that the City could implement to encourage more diverse and affordable new housing stock. Each of the following program opportunities could benefit the City's desire for affordable housing or housing for the homeless, but come with differing costs both in budget and in personnel. These programs include reconstitution of the City's Housing Program, new housing loans (public/private partnership), and new housing grants, land donation for shelters, relief from secondary unit building permit impact fees, certain fire sprinkler requirements and parking (soon to be addressed statewide due to the Governors signing

of SB1069), and a formal program, including a General Plan Amendment that encourages the development of “tiny houses” on land designated for high density housing by increasing the allowable density for the specific site when developed as a “Tiny House” development.

Housing Element

Affordable Housing
Second Units
Tiny House Movement

City Council Working Session
October 4, 2016

Housing Element

The purposes of the housing element are to:

- Identify the community's housing needs.
- State the community's goals and objectives with regard to housing production, rehabilitation, and conservation.
- Define the policies and programs that the community will implement to achieve the stated goals and objectives.

Housing Element Contents

- Existing Housing Needs
- Constraints on Housing
- Inventory of Sites
- Goals, Policies, Programs, and Quantified Objectives to Meet Community's Housing Needs

CITY OF
LINCOLN

POLICY DOCUMENT

2013-2021 HOUSING ELEMENT

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT, SEPTEMBER 2013

600 SIXTH STREET
LINCOLN, CA 95648



PREPARED BY:

PMC

2729 PROSPECT PARK DRIVE, SUITE 220
RANCHO CORDOVA, CA 95670

Housing Element Goals

Goals, Policies, and Program Actions

The City's Housing Element is based on the following five goals:

- 1.) Accommodate new housing to meet the needs of present and future Lincoln residents of all income levels.
- 2.) Conserve and improve the existing housing stock and residential neighborhoods.
- 3.) Address special housing needs in Lincoln.
- 4.) Promote equal housing opportunity.
- 5.) Evaluate the progress in implementing the City's housing programs.

Housing Element Facts

2012

As of 2012, the median home price in Lincoln was \$259,500.

As of December 2012, the least expensive home for sale in Lincoln (aside from foreclosures and pending sales) had a listing price of \$145,000.

There was an ample supply of houses affordable to moderate-income and above moderate-income households.

2016

Median home price in Lincoln is \$400,300.

The median price of homes currently listed in Lincoln is \$439,000. Lincoln home values have gone up 3.2% over the past year and Zillow predicts they will rise 3.8% within the next year.

As of September 2016, the least expensive home for sale in Lincoln (aside from foreclosures and pending sales) had a listing price of \$265,000.

Income categories

The standard HCD income category definitions are as follows:

- Extremely Low-Income: households earning less than 30 percent of the median household income.
- Very Low-Income: households earning 30 to 50 percent of the median household income.
- Low-Income: households earning 51 to 80 percent of the median household income.
- Moderate Income: households earning 81 to 120 percent of the median household income.



2016 Median Income

County's Median Income: **\$76,100** (4 person household)

Median Household Income in California: **\$63,566**

What is "Low Income"?

- Extremely Low: 30% or less of Median = up to \$22,850
- Very Low: 31 to 50% of Median = up to \$38,050
- Low-Income: 51 to 80% of Median = up to \$60,900
- Moderate Income: 81 to 120% of Median = up to \$91,300
- Above Moderate: Over 120% of Median = \$91,301+



Income Categories

2016 Income Limits

Income Category	Number of Persons in Household				
	1	2	3	4	5
Extremely Low (30%)	\$16,000	\$18,300	\$20,600	\$24,250	\$28,410
Very Low (50%)	\$26,650	\$30,450	\$34,250	\$38,050	\$41,100
Low (80% of area median)	\$42,650	\$48,750	\$54,850	\$60,900	\$65,800
Median	\$53,250	\$60,900	\$68,500	\$76,100	\$82,200
Moderate Income (120%)	\$63,900	\$73,050	\$82,150	\$91,300	\$98,600

Source: Department of Housing and Community Development

23% of Placer Households earn under \$35,000

Housing Element

Program Actions

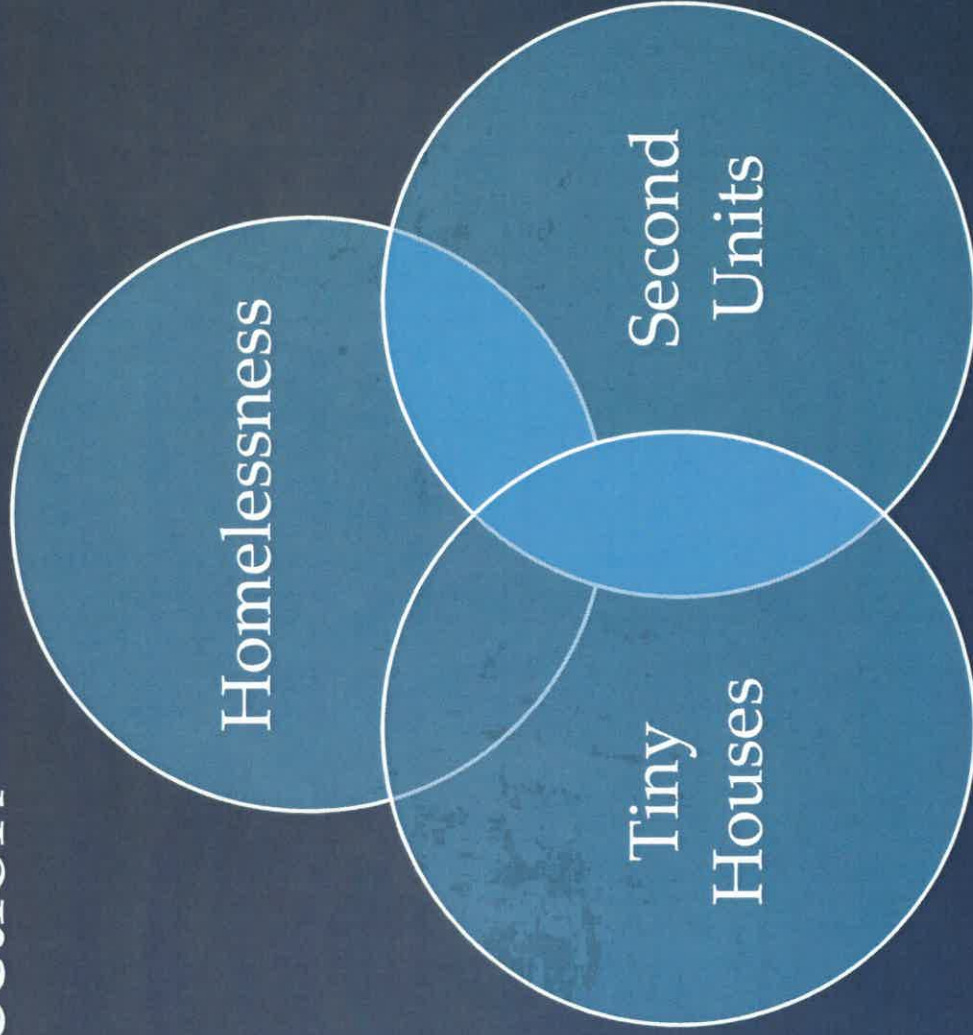
Goal - Accommodate new housing to meet the needs of present and future Lincoln residents at all income levels.

- Flexible Standards
- Maintain Review/Impediments
- Permit Second Units

What are we doing?

- During the reporting period, Lincoln has received \$1,000,000 in CalHome funds.
- The CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Program was started in March 1999 to offer eligible households low interest loans with flexible financing terms to make the necessary repairs to their homes.
- The First-Time Homebuyer Program has been awarded \$1,000,000 from a CalHome grant.

Connection



Homelessness Program

- The City is a member of the Placer Consortium on Homelessness (PCOH).
- The PCOH monitors the homeless population throughout Placer County
- Survey counted 275 homeless persons in 177 households
- Operation Make a Difference

Second Units

Many names for secondary units,

Granny flat

In-law quarters

Garage conversion

Carriage house/ Accessory dwelling unit



California law AB 1866 (2003)

- Requires jurisdictions to update second units regulations for consistency with state standards
- Eliminates all discretionary approval of second units; approvals must be ministerial
- Requires that explicit purpose of second unit regulations is to simplify and encourage the creation of second units

Second Units – Housing Element

Lincoln currently follows the standards prescribed in the Government Code:

- The unit not intended for sale and may be rented – owner occupied.
- Zoned for single-family or multifamily use.
- Attached and/or detached – 30% of the existing living area.
- Floor space shall not exceed 640 square feet.
- Adhere to development standards.



Second Units – Benefits

- Allows additional residential space on-site for extended families.
- Source of income - smaller and cheaper than many housing types – to build, and to occupy.
- Adds to property value.
- Appropriate for seniors, lower-income groups, others.
- Infill development, connected to existing and services.



Second Unit – Historical

- Since 1998 -two applications submitted for a second unit
- Guest Suites
- Covenant Recordation
- Non-Conforming Units
- Connection fess required

Second Unit – Permitting Process

- Connect to existing services
- Plan Check Costs
- Primary Residence
- City requirement – connection fees

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: 2nd Dwelling Unit, 640 SF			
DATE:	October 01, 2016		
SUBJECT:	Fee Calculation		
Fee Calculation:	Valuation: \$72,384		
Fee Type	Full Cost		
Plan Check	\$	600.00	
Permit Fee	\$	887.75	
Plumbing	\$	250.00	
Electrical	\$	275.00	
Mechanical	\$	180.00	
Energy	\$	88.78	
Sewer	\$	6,443.77	
Water Meter	\$	400.00	
Water Connection	\$	5,838.69	
CAT Fee (PCWA)	\$	15,320.00	
Park Tax	\$	261.00	
Park in Lieu	\$	192.00	
Community Service	\$	7,607.72	
Occupancy Certificate	\$	150.00	
Traffic Fee	\$	3,635.77	
Refuse Container	\$	85.00	
Seismic	\$	9.41	
Drainage	\$	1,795.30	
Cemetery	\$	206.19	
Regional Traffic	\$	1,448.19	
Green Fee	\$	3.00	
Incremental	\$	14.48	
County Facilities	\$	2,078.25	
Subtotal	\$	47,770.30	
Less Deposit	\$	(577.04)	
Total	\$	47,193.26	
Additional Costs (Case by Case)			
Fire Sprinklers	\$	800.00	
Admin Design Review	\$	180.00	
Encroachment	\$	225.00	

Second Unit – Alternatives

Placer County Requirements:

- Lot Size
- Parking Requirements
- Number of Units
- Location
- Unit Size
- Deed Restricted
- Fee Waiver

City of Rocklin Requirements:

- Residential - attached to the principal residence
- Internal connection
- Served by the same utility systems
- One bedroom and cannot exceed 40% of the square footage of the principal residence.
- Parking

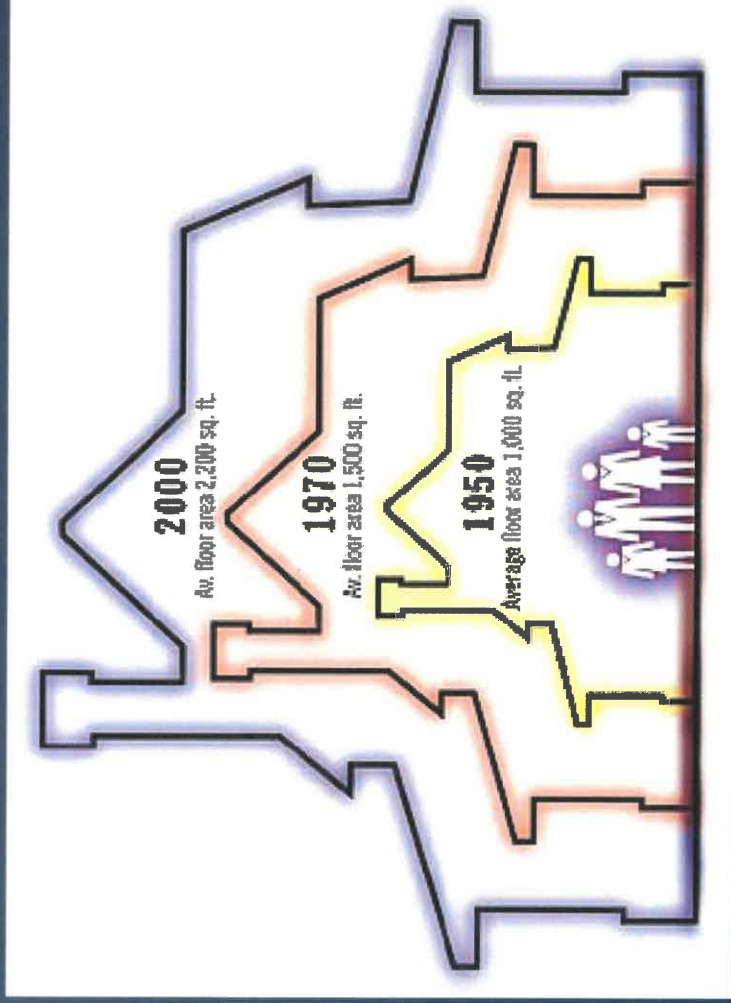
Second Unit – Permitting Process

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: 2nd Dwelling Unit, 640 SF			
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Fee Type	Full Cost		
Plan Check	\$ 600.00		
Permit Fee	\$ 887.75		
Plumbing	\$ 250.00		
Electrical	\$ 275.00		
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Additional Costs (Case by Case)			
Fire Sprinklers	\$ 800.00		
Admin Design Review	\$ 180.00		
Encroachment	\$ 225.00		

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: 2nd Dwelling Unit, 640 SF			
DATE:	October 01, 2016		
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CAT Fee (PCWA)	\$ 0.00		
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Park in Lieu	\$ 0.00		
Community Service	\$ 0.00		
Occupancy Certificate	\$ 150.00		
Traffic Fee	\$ 0.00		
Refuse Container	\$ 85.00		
Seismic	\$ 9.41		
Drainage	\$ 0.00		
Cemetery	\$ 206.19		
Regional Traffic	\$ 1,448.19		
Green Fee	\$ 3.00		
Incremental	\$ 14.48		
County Facilities	\$ 2,078.25		
Subtotal	\$ 6,937.05		
Less Deposit	\$ (577.04)		
Total	\$ 6,360.01		
Additional Costs (Case by Case)			
Fire Sprinklers	\$ 800.00		
Admin Design Review	\$ 180.00		
Encroachment	\$ 225.00		

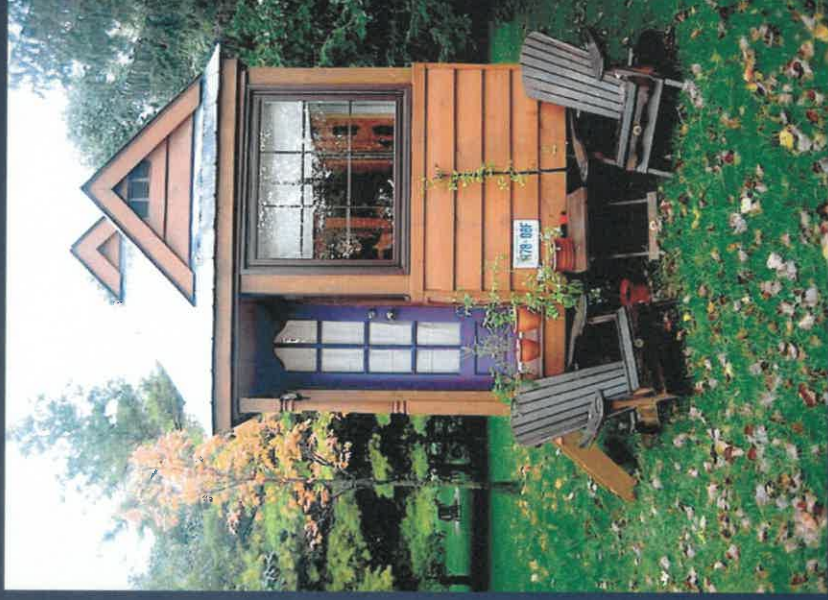
Tiny Houses – Historical Context

- The average U.S. house size has increased from 1,000 sq. ft. in 1950 to 2,000 in 2000, up now to 2,400 sq. ft.
 - Building permits are at a 5-year high for new homes.
- Average # of people per household has been dropping for 50 years. (Now 2.6).
- Energy costs aren't getting any cheaper.

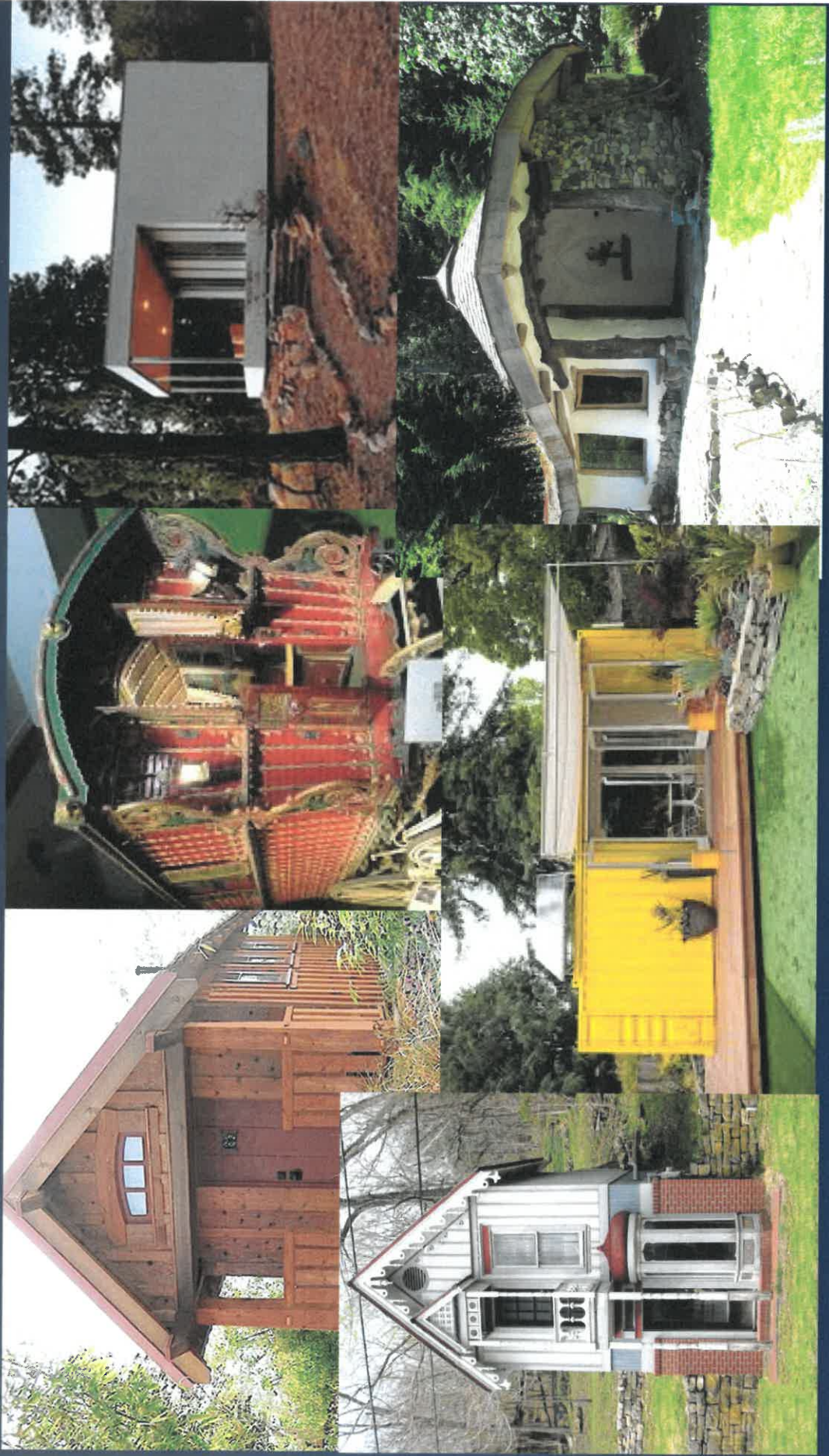


Tiny Houses – Common Characteristics

- Usually under (or just at) 1000 sq. ft. (the 1950 average house size).
- Can be split into four informal categories by size, from largest to smallest:
 - Cottage (up to 1000 sq. ft. or more)
 - Classic (100-300 sq. ft.)
 - Micro/Pico (under 100 sq. ft.)
 - Short-term (even less than 100 sq. ft.)



All of these are Tiny Houses



The Drawbacks of Tiny Homes

- Tiny houses are frequently built on wheels because zoning regulations require larger houses or won't allow such a structure to be placed on that area.
- Variances can be sought and received, but these are frequently expensive and take a long time to get (if you do at all).
- Permits for building (if foundation, not wheels) are only allowed for buildings up to code - specifically with size.

Other Uses for Tiny Homes:

Dormitories

Hotels (in Portland, OR)

Nursing Homes

Homeless Shelters (on the smaller side)

Office space for telecommuting

Small-scale business space

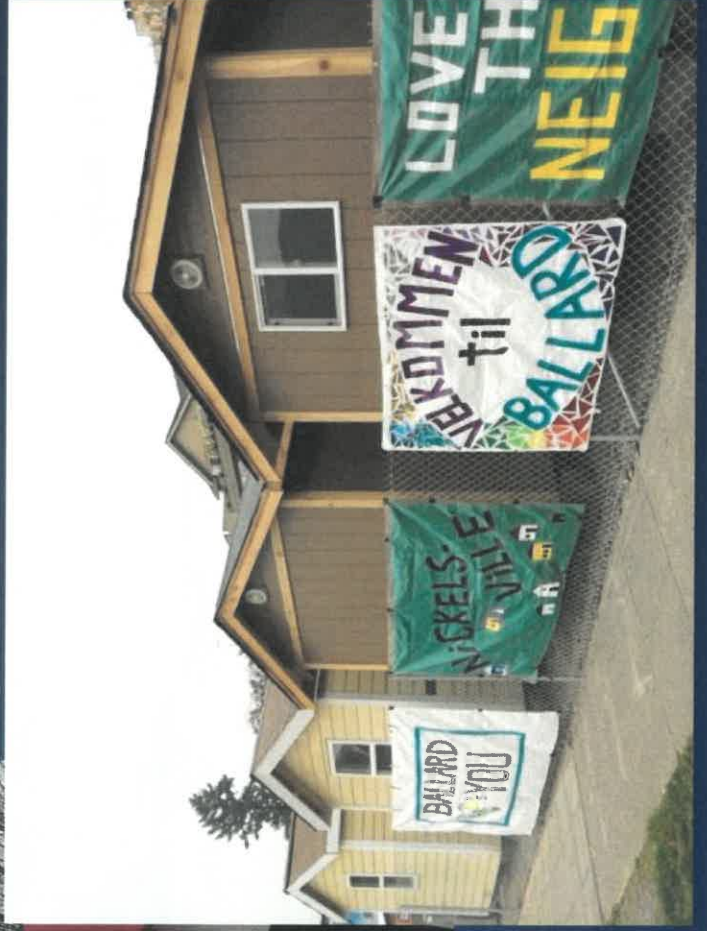
In-Law suites

Retiree housing

Disaster Relief (already proven in the

Katrina Cottages)

Tent Encampments and Tiny House Villages



Discussion topics

- Prioritization and Reconstitution of Housing Program
- Housing Funds
- Continuation of existing programs
- Other CDBG funding sources
- Develop priority actions
- Other ideas...